Theories of Childhood Overview

Thought: Many of these theorists grapple with the concept of teacher role in the classroom, with many advocating a student centered classroom where the teacher sets the stage and acts as an observer and guide, in various extremes of how the teacher should interact with students, or at all. The student centered classroom is labeled as “progressive” education in that it departs from the “traditional” education format of the teacher reciting out of a text book while students learn by rote, memorization, and repetition, and are not allowed to speak or interact during lecture.

Dewey

* Observation
* Teacher planning/direction
* Know children
* Organization
* Plan well
* Documentation
* Teacher knowledge of content area
* Make sense of world for students through greater knowledge and experience
* Purposeful curriculum
* Build on prior learning/experience (scaffolding – Vygotsky)
* Old vs. new not argument – what is of educational value
* Educational vs. mis-educational experiences

Montessori

* Child-centered environment
* Focus on environment for students and let them experiment
* Very little teacher intervention/interaction
* Child sized tools
* Focus on sensory experience
* Have accessible materials – low shelves, small chairs/tables
* Beauty and order in classroom – aesthetics
* Children have responsibility and competence
* Learn by doing
* Exploration/experimentation
* Open-ended scheduling/ time slots
* Children must have interest in work
* Intrinsic

Erikson

* Stages of psychosocial development
* Focus on emotional and social development and health
  + Age 0-1 : Trust vs. Mistrust
  + Internal/external
  + Hold babies during feeding
  + Respond to distress
  + Support attachment
  + Primary caregivers
* Ages 2-3: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt
  + Initiate choice and exploration
  + Allow swings between independence and dependence
  + Give simple choices
  + No false choices
  + Define clear limits
* Inititive vs. Guilt
  + Sense of purpose
  + Activiely focused, less defiant
  + Encourage independence
  + Focus on gains not mistakes (positive behavioral support)
  + Use real tools for real world activities

Piaget

* Cognitive focus
* Constructivist
* Open-ended questioning/activities
* Exploration
* Recess
* Nature
* Formal operational
* Concrete operations
  + Reverseibility
* Preoperational
  + No multi task
* Object permanence
* Learn by experience/ doing things

Vygotsky

* Zone of proximal development (ZPD)
  + Distance between what a student can do on their own and when help is needed
* Importance in observation of students
* Qualitative/Quantitative instruction/assessment
  + Observation of children just as valid as test scores
* Social cognition
* Scaffolding – building on past experience/knowledge
* Encourage discussion/conversation – teacher observes
* Social interaction